

# Mustang IIs Are Alive In The Heartland

by Teresa T. Vickery  
photos by VTC & Co.

**R**ick Richardson of Wichita, Kansas, remembers well when he was first smitten with the Mustang brand. While in his fourth year of elementary school, his father, a diehard Ford man, was given a loaner car when his company vehicle was in for repairs. That loaner car turned out to be a 1969 Mach 1 powered by a potent 351 Windsor. One ride was all it took and Rick was hooked for life!

His first pony car was a 1970 SportsRoof purchased in September 1975. "I drove the wheels off the car as any teenager would until it was time to find another. Eleven more Mustangs

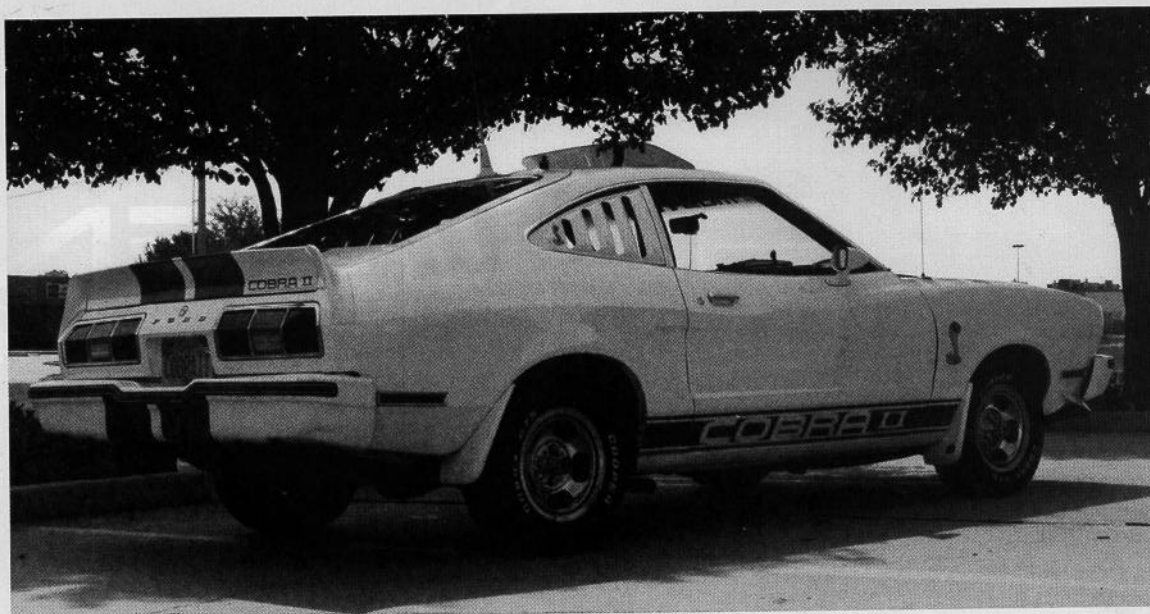
would be parked in my driveway, with all of them either being traded off or sent to car heaven," Rick states. After being ponyless for four years, he purchased a 1978 Mustang II hatchback in need of attention. An ad in a local publication for a 1977 Cobra II and parts car caught his eye. At first he was more interested in the parts car but when he laid eyes on the Cobra II he knew it had to be his. (Rick indicated that visions of Farrah Fawcett and "Charlie's Angels" kept running through his head!)

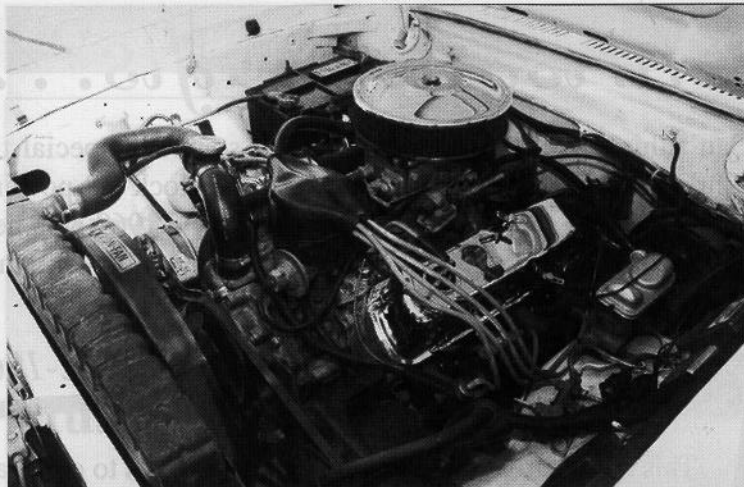
Originally equipped with a 302 2V, C-4 transmission, power steering, and 13" wheels, this new

find was in rough but driveable shape. The front and rear seats were torn and the paint was faded. Adding a bit of insult to injury were missing stripes and Cobra decals. However, the 302 was strong, enabling Rick to use the vehicle for daily transportation.

The correct stripes and decals (in red) were obtained, followed by a repaint to the "whitest white possible".

While cleaning the car shortly after its return home from the paint shop, a neighbor asked Rick if he had plans to attend the local "Mustang birthday party". "You would think the owner of his 13th



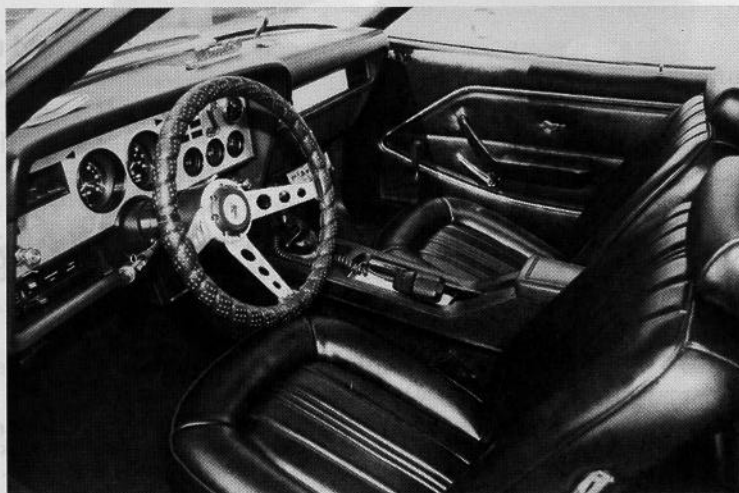


Mustang would have known about a local Mustang club and its activities, but I had no clue. So the neighbor proceeded to tell me the time and location of this event."

Upon arrival, Rick and his wife Lori were welcomed with open arms by this group of Mustang enthusiasts. By the end of the day's festivities, the Richardsons had joined the South Central Kansas Mustang Club.

Rick was enjoying the attention this "odd" little Mustang received until a destroyed cylinder plug and "floating parts" sidelined the pony. It turned out that the V8 had been previously rebuilt and was now in need of serious attention. After going over the list of options given by his mechanic, Rick opted to bore the cylinders to .60 over, use all new pistons, install a 351W RV cam, balance the crankshaft, and upgrade to Headman headers. The

automatic transmission was rebuilt and a shift kit added, and the 2.79 Traction Lok rear was rebuilt.



At the time of this photo session, approximately 90% of the black and red interior had been restored.

Overall, progress has been somewhat slow and difficult since

parts are nearly impossible to find. Reproduction parts are few and far between, and even decent donor vehicles are hard to find since some components of these ponies are popular with street rodders.

Rick also laments the fact that oft times the Mustang IIs are not given a separate class at car shows. They usually end up competing against the more popular late model 5.0 versions. However, since Rick has served as president of the South Central Kansas Mustang Club for several years, you can be assured that any show hosted by this group will include at least one class for second gen-

eration entries. And Rick is thrilled to see that interest and ownership of these vehicles is increasing within the Heartland area.

"What excites me most about this car is when I get behind the wheel after a bad day at work. With the turn of the key, the 302 V8 comes to life giving my inner soul a sense of comfort when the vibration of the exhaust rises through my body. It is a thrill to drive a little fast down the highway and watch people turning their heads in an attempt to catch a glimpse of a rarely seen car. Yes, I'm pleased to announce that the Mustang II is alive and well in the Heartland of the U.S."

